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RIN v. MIN & ANOR

HIGH COURT MALAYA, KUALA LUMPUR
EVROL MARIETTE PETERS J
[DIVORCE PETITION NO: WA-33-143-04-2024]
11 JUNE 2025

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Abstract – *Anonymisation could, among others, prevent the parties from being exposed to public humiliation and reputational damage, especially in today's digitally connected and enduring media environment where once identities are disclosed, it could be circulated and preserved indefinitely online. Via anonymisation, parties could give full and frank evidence in court without fear, of such, thus preserving the integrity of judicial process. Anonymisation, as such, could not be refused merely on grounds that the children from a marriage had attained the age of majority, and one of the parties is holding the position of a senior public official.*

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FAMILY LAW: *Divorce – Petition – Application for – Anonymisation of identities of parties – Whether application should be allowed – Children had attained age of majority – Whether ground to refuse anonymisation – Whether anonymisation protective measure for all parties – Difference between 'public interest' and 'public's interest' – Whether disallowance of application would serve public interest – Whether position of parties ground for refusing anonymisation – Whether non-anonymisation could hinder prospects of settlement – Courts of Judicature Act 1964, s. 15(2)*

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WORDS & PHRASES: *'public interest' and 'public's interest' – Meaning of – Whether family law cases inherently private – Whether non-disclosure of personal details of parties in matrimonial proceedings would serve broader public purpose*

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The respondent-husband and the petitioner-wife were married in January 1998. From the marriage, the two were blessed with two children ('children'). At the time of the present application, the children had attained the age of majority, *ie*, 18 years of age. Pursuant to allegations that the respondent together with the co-respondent, had committed adultery, the petitioner had commenced a divorce petition against the respondent. The present application was an application by the respondent, for the parties named in the divorce petition to be anonymised ('application'). *Via* this application, the respondent had, among others, sought the following reliefs: (i) that the names, addresses, details and any evidence relating to the divorce petition, which could likely lead to the identification of the parties, shall not be published except by letters of alphabets; (ii) that the full address of the immovable properties referred to in the cause papers filed and to be filed

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shall not be published; (iii) in consequence to prayer (i), that the identities of the parties referred to in the divorce petition and the cause papers filed and to be filed shall be redacted and substituted with letters of alphabets; (iv) that any and all cause papers in the divorce proceedings which could likely lead to the identification of the parties shall not be published or broadcasted by any means and in any media; and (v) that there shall be no visitors present in court during any hearing of the divorce petition save for the litigants, their family members and their respective solicitors and/or counsel. The issues that arose were whether the application should be allowed, considering that: (i) the children had attained the age of majority; (ii) the disallowance of the application would serve the public interest; and (iii) the respondent was holding the position of a senior public servant.

Held (allowing application):

(1) The anonymisation of all parties, including co-respondents, was appropriate. The absence of minor children was not a reason to forgo anonymisation. The rationale for anonymisation in matrimonial proceedings extends beyond the protection of minors. This is especially in cases involving intimate details of marital life, sexual conduct and allegations of adultery. Anonymity could: (i) preserve the integrity of judicial process, which could enable parties to give full and frank evidence without fear of public humiliation or reputational damage; (ii) negate potential collateral impact on third parties, such as co-respondents or extended family members, who may be drawn into the proceedings involuntarily; and (iii) shield the identity of the co-respondents, thus preventing the proceedings from becoming a vehicle for public shaming or moral judgment. Therefore, anonymity could not be unwarranted simply because the children are now adults or because the matter involved the allegations of adultery. (paras 22-26)

(2) Anonymity could serve to protect the interest of the petitioner. This is because, proceedings may unfold in a frank and unrestrained manner. Allegations had already been made without reservation, and deeply personal matters had come to light. Without anonymisation, the petitioner herself could risk substantial embarrassment and reputational harm. Efforts to publicly name and shame the respondent and the co-respondent could be counter productive. The desire for vindication may not yield the sympathy or moral clarity that the petitioner anticipated or expected. Upon the disclosure of all facts, there may be a real and substantial risks that the public may not view the petitioner solely through the lens of victimhood. (paras 27-30)

(3) Family law cases are inherently private. These cases deal with relationships, personal conduct, emotional wellbeing, and in many cases, the interests of the children. The disclosure of personal details,

A that are often intimate or distressing, would serve no broader public purpose, but would risk exposing the parties to humiliation, reputational harm or psychological distress. The petitioner's argument, as mentioned in issue (ii), therefore, failed to distinguish between what was in the 'public interest' and 'public's interest'. The former was a legitimate legal
B consideration; the latter was not. The mere fact that members of public may find the facts of the case intriguing or scandalous would not justify the erosion of privacy rights. As such, the petitioner's reliance on public interest, for the application to be dismissed, was misplaced. (paras 38-40)

C **(4)** The respondent appeared before this court not in his capacity as a senior public official, but as a private individual involved in a matrimonial dispute. The present issues concerned with familial circumstances, and they were entirely distinct from his official duties or public role. Regardless of the status or prominence of a position, no person would
D be immune to personal or domestic challenges. Holding public office would not shield a person from the complexities of family relationships. (para 45)

(5) Non-anonymisation could hinder the prospects of settlement. In matrimonial and family proceedings, preserving the possibility of an
E amicable resolution would often be the best interests of all parties involved, particularly where ongoing relationships, such as those between parents and children, must be maintained. In this case, the potential for out-of-court negotiations or a mutually agreeable settlement remained viable. Should the identities of the parties be publicised, such
F potential negotiations could be adversely affected. (paras 47 & 48)

Case(s) referred to:
CAS v. MPPL & Anor [2019] 2 CLJ 454 CA ***(refd)***
CHAN v. SHAN & Ors; ALIR (Intervener) [2025] CLJU 1143 HC ***(refd)***
Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Hj Abdul Razak v. PP [2019] 4 CLJ 705 FC ***(refd)***
G *DAY v. RAY & Anor [2024] CLJU 1152* ***(refd)***
HAI v. PAI & Anor [2025] 5 CLJ 916 HC ***(refd)***
HAL v. HAS [2024] 7 CLJ 373 HC ***(refd)***
HEK v. ING [2024] CLJU 843 HC ***(refd)***
KKF v. OSW [2019] CLJU 2041; [2019] 1 LNS 2041 HC ***(refd)***
M v. M [2020] CLJU 1723; [2020] 1 LNS 1723 HC ***(refd)***
H *MIL v. MON & Another Case [2024] 7 CLJ 306 HC* ***(refd)***
R (Guardian News And Media Ltd) v. City Of Westminster Magistrates' Court & Anor [2012] EWCA Civ 420 ***(refd)***
Tickle & Anor v. The BBC & Ors [2025] EWCA Civ 42 ***(refd)***

Legislation referred to:
I Courts of Judicature Act 1964, s. 15(1), (2)

For the petitioner – Watson Peters, Andrea Tan, Jude Peters & Annesha Meera; M/s Peters Chambers
For the respondent – Liza Chan Sow Keng, YN Foo, Emily Wong Li Yan, Yu Yi Lin & Nur Ainin Sofia Mohd Zulkifli; M/s Wong & Co
For the co-respondent – Sivanesan K Selvaratnam & Nur Khidmah Huzaisham; M/s Chris Lim Su Heng

Reported by Syamim Ariffin

JUDGMENT

Evrol Mariette Peters J:

Introduction

[1] This is the respondent-husband's application in encl. 31 ("this application") for, among others, parties to be anonymised.

[2] Prior to the disposal of this application, and during its case management stage, the petitioner-wife, respondent and co-respondent had, in the interim, already been anonymised as RIN, MIN and VIN respectively.

The Factual Background

[3] The petitioner, and respondent (collectively "the parties"), both Malaysian citizens, were aged 54 and 66 respectively at the time of the hearing of this application. They were married in January 1998, and had two children ("the children"), born in 2003 and 2006 respectively.

[4] The marriage was unable to withstand the test of time and after allegations of adultery made by the petitioner, she filed a divorce petition in April 2024, naming the co-respondent as a party to the matrimonial dispute.

[5] Although the respondent filed his reply in September 2024, he had, prior to that, in June 2024, filed this application seeking the following reliefs:

> (1) That the names, addresses, details and any evidence whether oral or documentary relating to these proceedings likely to lead to the identification of the parties, the children of the marriage including the younger child under 18 years and the names of witnesses to the proceedings herein shall not be published or cause to be published by any person save and except by letters of the alphabets assigned or to be assigned to each of them and in particular the names of the parties shall be referred to as follows:
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> (a) the Petitioner Wife as "ABC" or as "PW";
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> (b) the Respondent Husband as "DEF" or as "RH";
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> (c) the elder child and younger child as "GHI" and "JKL" respectively; and
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> (d) the Co-Respondent as "MNO".

A (2) The full address of the respective immovable properties referred to in the cause papers filed and to be filed shall not be published

(3) In consequence to prayer (1) above, that such identities of persons referred to in the Petition and cause papers filed to date and to be filed in this Honourable Court shall be redacted and substituted by the above alphabets or alphabets to be assigned to them; and

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(4) That no person including but not limited to the parties herein, whether by themselves or by their servants, agents, representatives and/or nominees shall post, publish or broadcast and/or cause to post, publish or broadcast any and all cause papers in these proceedings by any means and in any media (including but not limited to the traditional print and social media platforms) that is likely to lead to the identification of the parties (including but not limited to the identity of the parties and witnesses); and

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(5) There shall be no visitor presence in the court room during any hearing save for the litigants, their family members for emotional support and their respective solicitors and/or counsel.

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The Issues

[6] The only issue in this application was whether the parties and everyone involved in this matrimonial dispute should be anonymised.

E **[7]** The sub-issues for consideration were whether this application ought to be disallowed on the following grounds: (i) that the children had attained the age of majority, being over 18 years old; (ii) that disallowing the application would serve the public interest; and (iii) that the respondent's position warranted such refusal of anonymity.

F **[8]** I allowed this application in a modified manner, for the following reasons.

Contentions, Evaluation, And Findings

[9] I recognise that open justice is a cornerstone of many legal systems, G grounded in the principle that justice must not only be served but must also be publicly seen to be served. This principle is enshrined in s. 15(1) of the Courts of Judicature Act 1964 ('Courts of Judicature Act'), which states:

> Section 15 – Courts to be open and public
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> H (1) The place in which any Court is held for the purpose of trying any cause or matter, civil or criminal, **shall be deemed an open and public court** to which the public generally may have access. (emphasis added)

[10] The concept of open justice was powerfully articulated by Toulson LJ in the landmark case of *R (Guardian News and Media Ltd) v. City of Westminster* I *Magistrates' Court & Anor* [2012] EWCA Civ 420, in the following often-cited passage:

In a democracy, where power depends on the consent of the people governed, the answer must lie in the transparency of the legal process. *Open justice lets in the light and allows the public to scrutinise the workings of the law, for better or for worse.* Jeremy Bentham said in a well-known passage quoted by Lord Shaw of Dunfermline in *Scott v. Scott* [1913] AC 407, 477:

> Publicity is the very soul of justice. It is the keenest spur to exertion and the surest of all guards against improbity. It keeps the judge himself while trying under trial. (emphasis added)

[11] I am also aware of the recent English case of *Tickle & Anor v. The BBC & Ors* [2025] EWCA Civ 42, where it was stated that the principles of open justice and transparency were as much applicable in family as in other proceedings.

[12] The principle of 'open justice' serves to uphold public confidence in the administration of justice by ensuring that legal proceedings are conducted transparently and are subject to scrutiny. In this context, anonymisation, while intended to protect individual privacy, may inadvertently undermine the integrity of open justice. By concealing the identities of key parties or redacting pertinent details, anonymisation may obscure critical facts, impede the identification of systemic patterns or trends, and hinder meaningful analysis by the public, media, and legal community. Furthermore, it may unintentionally shield individuals or entities, such as public officials, Government agencies, or corporations, from legitimate public accountability, thereby weakening democratic oversight and public trust.

[13] I also recognise that in the digital era, the effectiveness of anonymisation is increasingly challenged. Advances in data analytics, machine learning, and the widespread availability of auxiliary data sets mean that de-identified information can often be re-identified through cross-referencing or inference techniques. As such, anonymisation may offer only an illusory sense of privacy, particularly when robust safeguards are not in place. This raises significant concerns about the sufficiency of anonymisation as a standalone measure for privacy protection and calls for a more nuanced and technologically informed approach to data governance in legal contexts.

[14] Nonetheless, well-established exceptions exist to the general principle of open justice, and matrimonial proceedings are a prime example. In such cases, courts routinely recognise the need to strike a careful balance between the principle of transparency and the equally important need to protect the privacy of the parties involved. This is particularly so where the proceedings entail the disclosure of highly personal, sensitive, or potentially embarrassing information. Protecting the anonymity of the parties in these circumstances serves not only their individual interests but also the broader public interest in ensuring that parties feel safe to engage in full and honest disclosure – something that lies at the heart of effective family justice.

[15] I must also add that, while there is currently no specific legislation or formal guideline that compels a judge of the family court to anonymise parties to a matrimonial dispute, it is my considered view that such a practice ought to be adopted as a matter of general principle. Anonymisation should be treated as the norm in family proceedings, rather than the exception. This approach would align with the need to protect the privacy and dignity of the individuals involved, especially children and vulnerable parties, and to encourage candidness and cooperation during what are often deeply personal and emotionally charged disputes.

[16] Accordingly, unless both parties expressly object to anonymisation, or where there is a clear and established history of the proceedings being conducted without anonymity, the presumption should be in favour of preserving anonymity in family proceedings.

[17] The court's authority to anonymise is based on discretion provided in s. 15(2) of the Courts of Judicature Act, which reads:

> Section 15 – Courts to be open and public
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> ...
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> (2) A Court may at any time order that **no person shall publish the name, address or photograph of any witness in any cause or matter or any part thereof** tried or held or to be tried or held before it, **or any evidence or any other thing likely to lead to the identification of any such witness;** and any person who acts in contravention of any such order shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding five thousand ringgit or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or to both. (emphasis added)

Whether Anonymity Should Be Denied Because Children Are Over 18

[18] In opposing the respondent's application for anonymity, the petitioner argued that such protection was no longer necessary, as the children were now over the age of 18. Accordingly, she submitted that there was no compelling justification to withhold their identities from disclosure. In support thereof, the petitioner cited several cases such as *KKF v. OSW* [2019] CLJU 2041; [2019] 1 LNS 2041, *HEK v. ING* [2024] CLJU 843; [2024] 1 LNS 843; *M v. M* [2020] CLJU 1723; [2020] 1 LNS 1723, *MIL v. MON & Another Case* [2024] 7 CLJ 306; [2024] MLJU 403, and *CAS v. MPPL & Anor* [2019] 2 CLJ 454; [2019] 4 MLJ 243, all of which involved minors. By contrast, the present case concerned individuals who had reached adulthood.

[19] I was unable to agree with the petitioner as, in my view, the ages of the children did not diminish the importance of safeguarding their privacy. Just because the children are above the age of 18, did not mean that their emotional and psychological well-being should be disregarded or deemed

less worthy of protection. Adulthood in law does not automatically translate to immunity from harm, especially harm of an emotional or reputational nature. In this case, deeply personal and distressing information regarding the parties and co-respondent would be revealed during the trial of the matrimonial dispute – information that is not only private but also potentially traumatising for the children.

[20] The last thing this court should do is exacerbate that trauma by unnecessarily revisiting or publicising these matters. Doing so would only serve to reopen old wounds, inflicting fresh psychological damage on the children.

[21] In any event, the anonymisation of parties in matrimonial disputes, even where no minor children are involved, is not without precedent. On the contrary, there is a growing body of case law that affirms the importance of maintaining confidentiality in family law proceedings, especially where sensitive personal matters and allegations of marital misconduct are involved.

[22] In the cases of *DAY v. RAY & Anor* [2024] CLJU 1152; [2024] 5 AMR 618, *HAL v. HAS* [2024] 7 CLJ 373, *HAI v. PAI & Anor* [2025] 5 CLJ 916; [2025] 3 AMR 887, and *CHAN v. SHAN & Ors; ALIR (Intervener)* [2025] CLJU 1143; [2025] 1 LNS 1143; [2025] MLRHU 1050, the court was faced with matrimonial disputes that did not concern dependent children, and yet, in each instance, the court decided that anonymisation of all parties, including co-respondents, was appropriate. These decisions reflect a consistent judicial approach: that the absence of minor children is not, in itself, a reason to forgo anonymisation.

[23] What the above-mentioned cases demonstrate is that the rationale for anonymisation in matrimonial proceedings extends beyond the protection of minors. It also encompasses the protection of personal dignity and privacy, especially in cases involving intimate details of marital life, sexual conduct, and allegations of adultery; the preservation of the integrity of the judicial process, ensuring that parties can give full and frank evidence without fear of public humiliation or reputational damage; and the potential collateral impact on third parties, such as co-respondents or extended family members, who may be drawn into the proceedings involuntarily.

[24] Moreover, in these above-cited cases, the identity of the co-respondents and alleged adulterers, often a source of public curiosity, was deliberately shielded to prevent the proceedings from becoming a vehicle for public shaming or moral judgment, which is not the role of the family court. The function of the court is to resolve legal disputes, not to provide a stage for salacious details to be aired to the public.

[25] The court also recognised that public interest in transparency must be balanced against the right to privacy under established legal principles, and that the risk of harm or distress from disclosure often outweighs any nominal public benefit, especially where the legal issues are confined to personal relationships and do not engage broader questions of public welfare or justice.

[26] Therefore, the suggestion that anonymity was unwarranted simply because the children are now adults, or because the matter involved allegations of adultery, was unsustainable in light of both established judicial practice and the underlying policy objectives of family law. The authorities cited above confirmed that anonymisation in such cases was well within the discretion of the court and should be exercised to safeguard the interests of justice.

[27] Furthermore, I was of the view that anonymisation in this case was not solely for the benefit of the children, respondent, and co-respondent, but could also serve to protect the petitioner's interests.

[28] This is because the proceedings may unfold in a frank and unrestrained manner. Allegations have already been made without reservation, and deeply personal matters have come to light. Without anonymisation, the petitioner herself risked substantial personal embarrassment and reputational harm – a reality that should not be underestimated.

[29] The petitioner must be mindful that efforts to publicly name and shame the respondent and the co-respondent could ultimately prove counterproductive. In sensitive matrimonial disputes, particularly those involving intimate relationships, emotional distress, and contested accounts of fault or misconduct, public perception is unpredictable. The desire for vindication in the court of public opinion may not yield the sympathy or moral clarity that the petitioner anticipates or expects.

[30] There would be a real and substantial risk that, once all the facts are disclosed, the public may not view the petitioner solely through the lens of victimhood. The attempt to cast oneself as the unequivocally wronged party could easily invite scrutiny or criticism, rather than public support.

[31] Furthermore, in today's digitally connected and enduring media environment, the consequences of public exposure are neither fleeting nor containable. Once identities are disclosed, the information may be circulated widely and preserved indefinitely online. This could result in long-term reputational damage not only to the respondent, the co-respondent and the children, but to the petitioner herself, whose private life would then be subject to pervasive and potentially harsh public judgment.

[32] In this context, anonymisation functions as a protective measure for all parties, including the petitioner. It would preserve personal dignity, safeguard against irreversible reputational harm, and would allow the court to focus on the just resolution of the dispute without the distraction of external sensationalism.

Whether Anonymity Should Be Denied In The Name Of Public Interest

[33] The petitioner resisted this application also on the ground of public interest. Upon careful consideration, I found no element of genuine public interest in the present case that would justify departing from the general practice of anonymising parties in family law matters. My reasons were as follows.

[34] First and foremost, it was crucial to draw a clear and critical distinction between "public interest" and "public's interest". These two concepts, though similar in phrasing, differ fundamentally in meaning and legal relevance.

[35] "Public interest" refers to matters that serve or protect the welfare, safety, or fundamental rights of the general public. It includes issues such as the administration of justice, exposure of wrongdoing by public officials, systemic failures in institutions, or criminal conduct that poses a risk to society at large. When a matter falls within the public interest, transparency may be required to uphold democratic accountability, deter crime, or protect public safety.

[36] In contrast, "public's interest" refers not to a legitimate legal or societal concern, but rather to public curiosity or the appetite for sensational or scandalous details which are often fuelled by voyeurism or media sensationalism. This type of interest, while perhaps widespread, is not legally sufficient to override established privacy protections. This is especially true in the context of family proceedings, which typically involve highly personal, emotional, and sensitive matters that warrant a greater degree of confidentiality and judicial restraint from public exposure.

[37] The petitioner placed significant reliance on the criminal case of *Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Hj Abdul Razak v. PP* [2019] 4 CLJ 705. It was undisputed that that case was undoubtedly of public interest, where the public interest in open justice is generally paramount and anonymisation is rare, except to protect vulnerable victims or witnesses. In my view, *Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Hj Abdul Razak v. PP* was not applicable to the present matter, which concerns a matrimonial dispute.

[38] By contrast, family law cases are inherently private. They deal with relationships, personal conduct, emotional wellbeing, and in many cases, the interests of children. The disclosure of personal details, that are often intimate or distressing, serves no broader public purpose and, instead, risks exposing parties to humiliation, reputational harm, or psychological distress.

[39] The petitioner's argument, therefore, fails to distinguish between what is in the public interest and what is merely of interest to the public. The former is a legitimate legal consideration; the latter is not. The mere fact that members of the public may find the facts of the case intriguing or scandalous does not justify the erosion of privacy rights.

[40] The petitioner's reliance on public interest is, therefore, misplaced, and anonymity was both justified and necessary in this case.

Whether Anonymity Should Be Denied Because Of The Respondent's Position

[41] The petitioner's counsel argued that anonymity should not be granted in this case because the respondent, at the time this application was filed, was a senior public servant, and as such, the public was entitled to be informed of his alleged transgressions, if at all.

[42] In my view, this line of reasoning amounts to a form of reverse discrimination, which has no place in the administration of justice. The law must operate on the principle of equality before the law, which means that anonymity, where justified, should be available to all litigants equally, irrespective of their status, occupation, or public profile.

[43] To single out a party for exposure solely because he holds a public office, before any finding of wrongdoing has been made, is not consistent with fairness or due process. The public interest in the conduct of public servants must be balanced against the individual's right to privacy and a fair trial. The mere fact that someone is publicly known does not strip them of legal protections afforded to every other litigant.

[44] In essence, anonymity is not a privilege, it is a procedural safeguard, and it should be applied based on the nature and sensitivity of the case, not the identity of the parties involved.

[45] The respondent appears before this court not in his capacity as a senior public official, but as a private individual involved in a matrimonial dispute. The issues at hand concern his personal and familial circumstances, and they are entirely distinct from his official duties or public role. It was, therefore, essential to draw a clear line between the individual's public office and his private life. Regardless of the status or prominence of his position, no person is immune to personal or domestic challenges. Holding public office does not shield one from the complexities of family relationships, nor should it. The law must treat all individuals equally in their personal capacities, and public status cannot be used either as a shield from legal scrutiny or as a means to deflect attention from personal accountability. Justice in family matters must rest on the facts and merits of the case, not the professional titles held by the parties involved.

[46] Hence, to deny anonymity purely on the basis of who the respondent is would be to impose a harsher standard on him simply because of his profession, which is not a tenable position in law.

[47] My decision to anonymise all parties involved was further reinforced by the practical consideration that non-anonymisation could hinder the prospects of settlement. In matrimonial and family proceedings, preserving the possibility of amicable resolution is often in the best interests of all parties involved, particularly where ongoing relationships, such as those between parents and children, must be maintained.

[48] In the present case, I was of the view that the potential for out-of-court negotiations or a mutually agreeable settlement remained viable. However, should the identities of all parties involved be made public, it is likely that such potential negotiations would be adversely affected.

[49] Public exposure can entrench positions, heighten emotional tensions, and reduce the willingness of parties to compromise, especially when reputational concerns or public scrutiny become factors. Anonymisation in the present case, therefore, was not only a matter of protecting privacy, but also a pragmatic step aimed at encouraging a constructive and less adversarial resolution of the dispute.

Concluding Remarks

[50] During the hearing of this application, the petitioner's counsel was specifically asked to identify the prejudice that would be caused to the petitioner if anonymisation was allowed. However, his response centred primarily on abstract notions of public interest, invoking the fact that the respondent is a public servant and referencing the principle of open justice. In my view, these arguments did not adequately address the question posed, which was focused on the direct prejudice to the petitioner herself.

[51] Given the absence of a clear and substantive answer, the inescapable inference was that the petitioner's true motive behind opposing anonymisation was to publicly name and shame the respondent and co-respondent, even before any finding of fact had been made regarding the nature of their relationship, if any.

[52] This impression was further reinforced by the language used by counsel, who, during submissions, referred to the co-respondent as a "home wrecker". Such a term was not only inflammatory and prejudicial, but it was also inappropriate in the context of ongoing proceedings, where no determination had yet been made as to whether any relationship existed between the respondent and co-respondent, or whether such a relationship contributed to the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

[53] The petitioner's counsel's submission was, therefore, not only legally untenable, but it verged on inviting the court to publicly stigmatise the co-respondent, akin to branding her with a modern-day scarlet letter. The tone of the submission reeked of moral superiority and self-righteousness, as though the courtroom were a forum for moral condemnation rather than a venue for the impartial administration of justice. Such an approach not only strayed from the core principles of fairness and objectivity but also risked turning judicial proceedings into a platform for personal vindication rather than legal resolution.

[54] I also have to remind the petitioner and her counsel that in matters such as these, particularly within the delicate framework of family law, it must be remembered that those who cast a stone must also be prepared to bear its weight. As the saying goes, "let he who is without sin cast the first stone". This timeless principle serves as a reminder that no party should hastily assign blame or take a rigid position without first reflecting on their own conduct and responsibilities.

[55] In this context, the court cannot permit the petitioner to invoke fairness, public interest, or legal propriety in a manner that ignores her own role in the dispute. Justice demands consistency and introspection; all parties must be held to the same standard. Only then can the administration of justice remain both procedurally fair and morally sound.

[56] In summary, seeking exposure in pursuit of emotional or moral vindication may feel momentarily empowering, but it would entail considerable and enduring risks. Anonymity in the present case would ensure that the proceedings are conducted with fairness, discretion, and respect for the humanity of everyone involved. It would uphold the integrity of the family justice system and would serve the broader objective of protecting the individuals, on all sides, whose lives are already under immense strain.

[57] For this reason, and to avoid any form of 'jigsaw identification', my decision to anonymise not only the names of all parties to the matrimonial dispute, but also all witnesses, including any establishment mentioned. This approach was taken to ensure that innocent third parties did not suffer undue consequences due to their association with the proceedings.

[58] It was crucial to add that all cause papers related to the matrimonial dispute are strictly prohibited from being disseminated or published in any form. However, this restriction did not extend to the publication of this judgment itself, as it constitutes an official court document intended for public access. Given that this judgment is to be made publicly available, the media and other interested parties are permitted to report on the case, provided such reporting is fair, accurate, and adheres to all applicable legal and ethical standards. Crucially, this includes strict compliance with the court's directive to preserve the anonymity of all parties to these proceedings, at all times.

Conclusion

[59] In conclusion with the aim of upholding justice, and following a thorough examination and prudent evaluation of all the evidence adduced, encompassing both written and oral submissions by counsel, this application was allowed in the following modified manner with costs:

(i) that the names, addresses, details and any evidence whether oral or documentary relating to these proceedings likely to lead to the identification of the parties, the children of the marriage and the names of witnesses to the proceedings herein shall not be published or cause to be published in the grounds of judgment(s) of the court, save and except by letters of the alphabets assigned or to be assigned to each of them and in particular the names of the parties shall be referred to as follows: (a) the petitioner as "RIN"; (b) the respondent as "MIN"; (c) the elder child and younger child as "RSD" and "ASD" respectively; and (d) the co-respondent as "VIN";

(ii) the full address of the respective immovable properties referred to in the cause papers filed and to be filed shall not be published in the grounds of judgment(s) of the court;

(iii) in consequence to prayer (i) above, that such identities of persons referred to in the judgments of the court shall be redacted and substituted by the above alphabets or alphabets to be assigned to them in the grounds of judgment(s) of the court;

(iv) that no person including but not limited to the parties herein, whether by themselves or by their servants, agents, representatives and/or nominees shall post, publish or broadcast and/or cause to post, publish or broadcast any and all cause papers in these proceedings, except for publication of the grounds of judgment(s) of the court, by any means and in any media (including but not limited to the traditional print and social media platforms) that is likely to lead to the identification of the parties (including but not limited to the identity of the third parties and witnesses);

(v) there shall be no visitor present in the court room during any hearing, save for the litigants, their family members for emotional support, and their respective solicitors and/or counsel; and

(vi) costs of RM8,000 to be paid by the petitioner to the respondent within 30 days from the date of the order subject to payment of allocatur.